

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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BLACK CAUCUS SLAMS DANIELS FOR HURTING STATE WORKERS

INDIANAPOLIS – Members of the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus today slammed Gov. Mitch Daniels for moving quickly to get rid of collective bargaining rights for 23,000 state workers, and said they would strive to pass legislation restoring those rights in the 2005 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

"It is very disappointing to see that a governor who has promised a new day in Indiana appears to believe that day includes removing the rights of thousands of working men and women to bargain for their pay and benefits," said State Rep. Greg Porter (D-Indianapolis), chairman of the caucus.

Bargaining rights for state employees was first granted in an executive order issued by Gov. Evan Bayh in 1989 and remained in effect through the tenures of Frank O'Bannon and Joe Kernan. Daniels rescinded that order in his second day in office.

"It is hard to reconcile the words of our new governor on his first day in office with his actions on the second day," Porter said. "Gov. Daniels has spoken long and loud about supporting those hard-working state employees who dedicate their lives to helping the people of Indiana, but now it appears that he does not support their efforts to earn a decent wage and have the right to seek improved health care benefits."

In the few hours since Daniels issued his order, Porter and other caucus members said they have heard from literally hundreds of state workers concerned about their futures.

"Imagine the situation that faces someone who has worked long and hard for years as a government employee to serve the people of Indiana," Porter said. "What are they getting for their years of dedication? Thanks to Mitch Daniels, it is the prospect of reduced insurance benefits, immediate dismissal without any means of defending themselves, and the future possibility of no pay raises."

Despite the governor's efforts to harm state workers, Porter said he and other caucus members would make an attempt to grant collective bargaining rights by advancing legislation in the House and Senate.

"Right now, there is no one out there who stands on behalf of the 23,000 working men and women who work for our state," Porter said. "I promise that the members of the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus will stand up for them in the halls of state government. When this session is over, state workers will know which lawmakers are ready to fight for their rights."

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This news release can be accessed on the Internet at www.IN.gov/H96